



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

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Part	Section	Subject	Policy No.	Review Date
Administration and Management	General Administration	Public Service and Telephone Reception	1.1.5	
ACA Standard	3-ALDF-1A-14 Maintains and Makes Available SOP to Employees			
Consent Decree	Paragraph 54 Develop Facility Policies and Procedures			

I. PURPOSE

To provide guidelines and procedures to be utilized by the Department of Corrections employees when in contact with the public, answering the telephone, transferring calls, providing information and making referrals.

II. POLICY

It is the Policy of the Department of Corrections to provide professional, efficient and courteous service to its visitors and the public in person and on the telephone through good customer service.

III. PROCEDURES**A. Public Inquiries**

1. Correctional personnel will follow good public service rules at all times.
2. Attend to the individual at the window/office or on the telephone promptly.
3. Listen attentively.
4. Remember to speak clearly and in plain language. Do not assume the general public understands police or corrections jargon.
5. Handle public requests for information efficiently, intelligently and politely.
6. If the answer to a question is unknown, refer the individual to someone who can assist him/her or pass the message along to someone who can. The public will appreciate that more than a wrong answer.

7. Maintain a professional appearance and attitude at all times.
8. The individual's attitude should not be taken personally.

B. Telephone Reception

Telephone conversations conducted by employees of the Department of Corrections shall be professional and courteous in nature. Important numbers of the different sections of the department should be readily available for reference. Employees shall make every attempt to supply information or assistance needed or refer the caller to the appropriate authority that can assist. It is important that the employee should have readily available pen and paper for taking notes on pertinent information.

If you perceive a caller has a complex problem and you are unable to assist, explain that you are going to let him/her talk to someone who can assist him or her since you cannot.

Supervisors are responsible for regular surveillance and evaluation of their subordinate's telephone answering and demeanor.

1. Incoming Calls

Often, a person's first and/or only contact with the Department of Corrections is made on the telephone. If the caller is given courteous, intelligent answers to his/her inquiries, he/she will gain a favorable impression of the Department. If he/she was the victim of a poorly handled call, he/she will not forget it easily.

Therefore, employees will use the following guidelines when answering the telephone:

- a. Incoming calls should be answered as promptly as possible. As a general rule, telephone calls received at the answering points should be responded to within three rings.
- b. To answer incoming calls promptly, it may be necessary to place a current call on hold. Advise the current caller you are placing him/her on hold and why, otherwise the caller may think you have hung up. Periodically check back with a caller on hold, and if the delay will be extensive, take a message or a number where the caller can be re-contacted.
- c. When receiving calls from designated answering points, identify the Department, your location and yourself to let the caller know he/she has reached the correct number, to establish a rapport with the caller, and to reduce confusion:

Properly identify the Department with an appropriate greeting, i.e., "Good Morning, Department of Corrections, this is _____, how may I help you?"

- d. Be aware of the fact that holding your hand over the receiver and talking to someone other than the caller does not always restrict the caller from hearing you. It is best to place the caller on hold.
- e. Employees should keep in mind that the matter being expressed by the caller may be trivial or unimportant to the employee, but very important for the caller.
- f. Callers wishing to see a corrections officer should be referred to the Central Control.
- g. Calls regarding departmental matters should be referred to the Commissioner of Corrections or the directors.
- h. News media requesting information or a news release should be referred to the Commissioner of Corrections or the Directors.
- i. A person requesting to speak to "someone in charge" should be asked what the call is about to determine who should receive the call.
- j. A person who has a complaint against an employee should be referred to the directors. If unavailable and immediate referral is determined to be advisable, the caller may be referred to the Director of Corrections, Pre-Trial and Civil Detention (CPC) or the Director of Administration.

2. Transferring Calls

When transferring calls, advise the caller that the call is being transferred to avoid the perception of being cut off. If possible, give the caller the direct number for future reference.

- a. If a telephone extension is busy, the employee should determine whether the caller would like to hold or leave a message. If the caller would like to hold, place the call on hold and route it as soon as the intended line is free.

(Full feature telephones: Press "transfer or link" button, then the correct extension number and either hang up or give a message to the individual receiving the transfer, then hang up.)

- b. If a caller has been transferred several times and you find you are unable to be of assistance, try to avoid another transfer unless you are sure someone else is

available to help. Until someone can help, take the caller's name and number, and assure him/her that someone will return the call as soon as possible.

- c. If a specific employee is requested and determined to be gone from his/her desk or the building, the following information should be obtained:
 - Identity of the caller.
 - Telephone number of the caller and how long they can be reached at the number given. Include extension number.
 - Applicable message.
 - Date and time the telephone call was received.

3. Authorized Personal Usage

The department recognizes that personal calls must occasionally be made during work times. Personal calls may be made during an employee's work time when necessary for family emergencies such as illness/injury, unanticipated changes in work schedule, emergency child care issues, or other type of home emergencies.

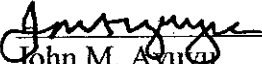
Limited personal use of department telephones, internet or facsimile devices is permissible if limited in scope and frequency, if in conformance with other elements of this policy, and if not connected with a profit-making business enterprise or the promotion of any product, service, or cause that has not received prior approval of this agency. Personal use shall not cause an employee to accrue extra duty hours or delay the employee's responsibility to accomplish work tasks on schedule.

If a personal toll or long distance call must be made, the employee must place the call collect, use a personal telephone credit card, or a prepaid debit card.

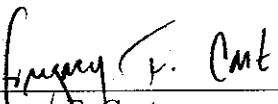
4. Unauthorized Actions

- a. Personal telephone numbers of employees are confidential. The release of these numbers is prohibited.
- b. Employees may not use department telephones for sweepstakes drawings, radio contests, or similar activities.
- c. Facsimile devices, whether stand-alone or supported on a department computer will not be used for receiving or transmitting materials that involves the use of obscene language, images, jokes, sexually explicit materials, or messages that attack any person, group, or classification of individuals are prohibited whether or not a recipient has consented to or requested such material.

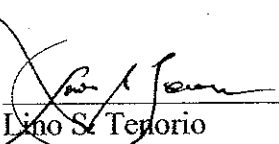
- d. Employees are prohibited from surreptitiously recording telephone conversations. Employees who are discovered surreptitiously recording and/or having installed unauthorized recording devices on department telephones will be subject to disciplinary action, and possibly prosecution.
- e. The department does not authorize the receipt of collect calls from the public.
- f. Employees may not use government telephones to conduct any illegal activity such as harassing telephone calls, obscene calls, etc.
- g. If it is determined telephone use is not in compliance with this policy and procedures, the involved employee may face disciplinary action.

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